



**GalleryOfTheGamer**  
Behind the Art: Modern Gamer Personas



**ARE  
YOU  
A GAMER?**





Activision Blizzard Media Presents:

# Gallery of the Gamer

## ABOUT THE GALLERY

Who are gamers? Gamers are your neighbor, your aunt, and your boss. Gamers are your friends, colleagues, parents, and even your favorite celebrities. They make up 2.7 billion people globally<sup>1</sup>, yet the full spectrum of gamers remains largely unseen.

That's because gamers are often painted as young, headset-wearing males playing on a console in their parents' basement. But this picture is outdated. The gaming world has evolved. The technology that powers games has improved. The players have changed. But what about the way we think about gaming and gamers?

The research showcased in this gallery takes a deeper look at gamers. It reveals that less than a third of gamers fit the stereotypical gamer mold. If you consider a gamer as someone who lives and breathes gaming, it's even less. Only a sliver of the gaming population looks like the young, male, gamer caricature we're familiar with.

By developing gamer personas that are based on questions beyond simple demographics and platforms used, the result is a more complete picture of who gamers are. One that reveals more diversity and depth than previously understood.

<sup>1</sup>Newzoo Global Games Market Report, May 2020

# INSPIRATION

This consumer research defines holistic gamer personas based on demographics, platforms, motivations, attitudes, and psychographics.

To better understand the gaming audience, Activision Blizzard Media conducted a quantitative study among adults over the age of 18 who played, watched, or engaged with video games at least once in the past month. Gower's Distance clustering was used to identify unique subsets of gamers by analyzing survey responses and creating grouping distinctions based on maximal differences.

The online-based study surveyed 21,168 gamers split across the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

# EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

## 1. SIX DISTINCT GAMER PERSONAS WERE IDENTIFIED IN OUR RESEARCH

Gamers are not homogenous. When gamers are clustered by identity, motivations, and play styles, the result is six distinct gamer personas. Their motivations converge around the games they play and how they play them, rather than just their basic demographics.

## 2. LESS THAN HALF OF ALL GAMERS IDENTIFY AS A GAMER

Over 60% of gamers surveyed responded “no” or “unsure” when asked “are you a gamer?” Most gamers refuse to acknowledge the gamer title, making the audience larger and more diverse than many realize.

## 3. ONLY A SMALL MINORITY OF ALL GAMERS FIT THE TYPICAL GAMER STEREOTYPE

The stereotypical gamer is by no means representative of the broader gaming audience. Of the six gamer personas, only two resemble the stereotypical image of a gamer. The most hardcore gamer makes up just 4% of the overall audience.

## 4. THE SINGLE-PLATFORM PLAYER IS RARE

The majority of gamers play across multiple platforms. Mobile gamers, often thought of as single-platform users, often play on console and PC. Consequently, looking at gamers only through the lens of single-platform usage doesn't give the full picture.

# THE COLLECTION: GAMER PERSONAS

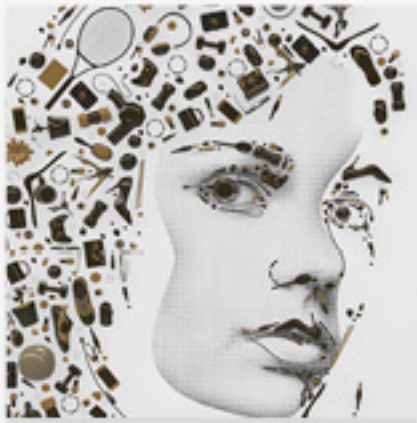
Does **not** identify as a gamer



## SUPER SWIPERS

32%

Their love for gaming comes from the simple enjoyment of quick, accessible word and tile-matching games. Gaming might not be their priority or identity, but their love of the game is real.



## DABBLERS

19%

They dabble in non-mobile gaming platforms, but their comfort zone is in the popular mobile titles they know and love.



## DENIALISTS

10%

They're all about gaming but not the gamer title. If you call them a gamer, they'll shoo you away with one hand while getting a high score with the other.

Identifies as a gamer



## LIFESTYLISTS

11%

They have an affinity for playing the latest and greatest games. Find them reading gaming news, watching esports, and playing the newest releases.



## PLAYER ONES

25%

They touch all things gaming and spend a majority of their free time learning, watching, or playing games.



## NEXT LEVELERS

4%

They play more, spend more, view more, and have deeper motivational ties to gaming content than any other gaming persona. And that's saying something.



**IN THE MIX**

# SUPER SWIPERS

Do not identify as a gamer

Super Swipers like to play games, but they don't want gaming to define them. Their approach to gaming is one of casual recreation, driven primarily by the fact that they're either fairly new to the gaming scene or haven't played consistently for a while. However, it's this group's quiet engagement that makes them so interesting.

Super Swipers invest more time per week with mobile games than your average gamer, with three-quarters of Super Swipers playing mobile games at least weekly. They can be found enjoying Candy Crush or Words With Friends in their leisure time after work or on weekends.

So why don't Super Swipers identify as gamers? It's because they don't feel they play enough games or spend enough money to qualify. Their ideal time off is spent with loved ones, and their preferred activities are watching TV and cooking, which they do almost daily. Their lack of a deeper connection to gaming characters, events, and social features may also widen the gap between this audience's self identification and gaming behavior.

Super Swipers' motivations for gaming are strongly tied to the enjoyment of gaming itself. Four out of five Super Swipers bask in the sense of achievement from overcoming in-game obstacles. Super Swipers may reject the gamer label, but they can't reject their love of gaming.

# SUPER SWIPERS

Do not identify as a gamer

Their love for gaming comes from the simple enjoyment of quick, accessible word and tile-matching games. Gaming might not be their priority or identity, but their love of the game is real.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 50
- Gender Skew: 64% female

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- 32% more likely to play match 3 games
- Least likely to spend money on games

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- 78% like having goals to finish in games

### FAVORITE GENRES



Word Games



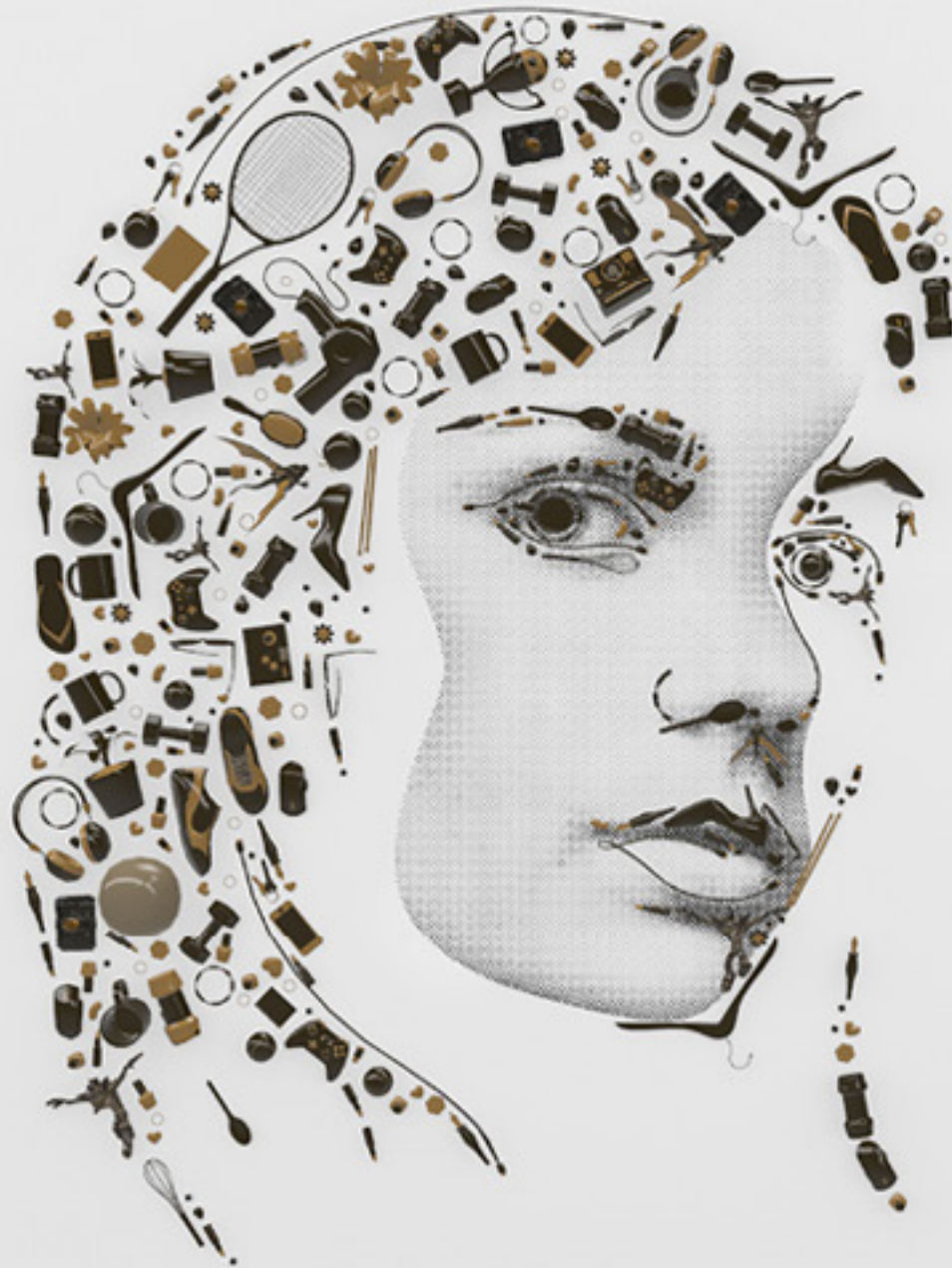
Match 3



Card/Arcade



**58% MORE LIKELY THAN YOUR  
AVERAGE GAMER TO PLAY  
WORD MATCHING GAMES**



## THE FULL PICTURE

# DABBLERS

Do not identify as a gamer

Dabblers have played games on and off over the past two decades and continue to include gaming on their list of hobbies. Despite genuine interest in gaming and their years of engagement, these players still think that their play isn't deep enough to warrant self-identification. Mainly, they feel that they don't play enough games to fully be part of the gaming community. Their shifting interests over the years have led them to dedicate time to other activities like social media, cooking, and shopping — all of which this group does almost every week.

However, Dabblers are still curious about the world of gaming. They spend time learning and exploring video games independently several times a week, finding small ways to fit in gaming throughout the day. Through this discovery and participation they are building their own connection to the gaming community.

Dabblers are more likely to be middle-aged than other gaming segments. Since their gameplay has been inconsistent over the years, learning how to play new games doesn't come easily to this group. Only a third feel confident in their gaming skills, and they are unlikely to look for in-game social connections or try playing with others.

Although they engage with all gaming formats, they tally among the lowest in handheld, console and PC hours, with only slightly more hours played weekly than Super Swipers. Mobile gaming is where they are most comfortable, but they are curious about other elements of gaming culture and are slowly building familiarity with all gaming has to offer across platforms and franchises.

# DABBLERS

Do not identify as a gamer

They dabble in non-mobile gaming platforms, but their comfort zone is in the popular mobile titles they know and love.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 46
- Gender Skew: None

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- More likely to stick with a few core, mobile titles

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- Most likely to find gaming difficult
- Least likely to find fulfillment from gaming

## FAVORITE GENRES



Match 3



Action & Adventure



Card/Arcade



**57% SAY THEY FEEL SUCCESSFUL  
WHEN THEY OVERCOME THE  
OBSTACLES IN GAMES**



## BALANCE OF POWER

# DENIALISTS

## Do not identify as a gamer

The title 'gamer' means different things to different people, but for this segment, the external influence of negative stereotypes may impact their personal attachment to the gaming community. Denialists, who represent one in every ten gamers, enjoy playing games but don't associate themselves with the negative connotations they believe surround gamers.

Denialists actively use multiple gaming platforms, sign up for gaming subscription services, and play a variety of games. They love the competitive nature of games, enjoy playing with others, and engage with franchises from which global esports leagues have been built. They've been playing games consistently for decades, but as they have grown older and work has taken more of their time, the role of gaming in their lives shifted.

Although they dedicate a significant amount of their week to gaming, Denialists are still more likely than other segments to question gaming as part of their identity. This could be because their identity is built around other things — Denialists spend large parts of their week exercising, playing or watching sports, and keeping up with the latest news and current affairs online.

Denialists are still big fans of video games. They appreciate the innovative world of gaming and the mental stimulation that action, shooter and sports game genres provide. In short, they love games, they just don't like labels.

# DENIALISTS

Do not identify as a gamer

They're all about gaming but not the gamer title. If you call them a gamer, they'll shoo you away with one hand while getting a high score with the other.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 41
- Gender Skew: 76% male

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- 40% more likely to be found playing on a console
- Twice as likely to play FIFA than average

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- More likely to play games for the social elements
- 51% believe gamers are misunderstood

## FAVORITE GENRES



Shooter



Action & Adventure



Sports



ARE YOU A  
GAMER?  
62% "NO"  
38% "UNSURE"



PARALLEL UNIVERSES

# LIFESTYLISTS

## Identify as a gamer

For Lifestylists, gaming is a mainstay of everyday entertainment. While their gaming interests are broad when it comes to platforms and genres, their preferred games are predictably mainstream. They invest time and money into the most popular elements of gaming culture.

The originality, visual graphics, and mental stimulation gaming provides is highly appealing to Lifestylists. Gaming is a preferred hobby, and they prioritize it over other more traditional entertainment interests. This group is the least likely out of all the personas to be found watching TV more than once a week. They would much rather spend their time going to movies, reading, creating art, or listening to podcasts.

Lifestylists play across PC and console in almost equal amounts, trailing only the most devoted players in their engagement. Some have been playing for decades, while others have ramped up their interest in games more recently. They devote extra time to learning about the gaming space and industry by reading gaming news, and they appreciate the skills of other players by watching gaming streams and competitive esports matches.

This group owns the gamer label, but the label doesn't typify their core sense of self. They reject popular misconceptions about gamers, yet they're also unlikely to highly associate positive attributes to gamers. For Lifestylists, gaming makes them a part of a community, but it isn't singular in adding dimension to their lives.

# LIFESTYLISTS

Identify as a gamer

They have an affinity for playing the latest and greatest games. You can find them reading gaming news, watching esports, and playing the newest releases.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 36
- Gender Skew: 66% male

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- 35% more likely to subscribe to a gaming subscription service
- 59% more likely to play Action RPGs

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- 65% enjoy video games for the graphics

## FAVORITE GENRES



Action RPG



Action & Adventure



Battle Royale



**47% MORE LIKELY THAN YOUR  
AVERAGE GAMER TO BE FOUND  
WATCHING OR READING ABOUT  
GAMING AT LEAST WEEKLY**

# PLAYER ONES

## Identify as a gamer

Despite representing only 25% of gamers, Player Ones are the group that most people think of when they hear the word gamer. These gamers don't just like to play, they love it. They are young, game wherever and whenever they can, and spend frequently and substantially on their love for gaming.

For Player Ones, gaming is as much a lifestyle as a hobby. They've been playing games consistently for decades, making gaming a core part of their identity. They stay on top of the gaming world, reading the latest gaming news and getting their hands on new games as soon as (or even before) they're officially released. This early adoption also extends to gaming hardware, with Player Ones more likely to have the latest and greatest gaming tech compared to most other gaming segments. The only thing stopping them from gaming more often are major life events like getting an education, going to work, or having a family.

Despite their busy lives, Player Ones remain committed to gaming. Their passion for games is no secret to those who know them, and this gaming expertise is often tapped into by friends or family who are looking to purchase technology products and services themselves. Their willingness to throw themselves into any gaming experience is likely explained by the confidence they feel when playing games. Game play grants them a valuable sense of freedom and empowers them with the capacity for exploration and self-expression. They don't care what platform they are playing on, as long as they are playing.



**VICTORY TAKES FLIGHT**

# PLAYER ONES

Identify as a gamer

They touch all things gaming and spend a majority of their free time learning, watching, or playing games.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 35
- Gender Skew: 69% male

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- More likely to have the latest hardware and software
- Almost twice as likely to watch others play games

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- More likely to be emotionally moved by games
- More likely to identify with video game characters

## FAVORITE GENRES



Action RPG



Action & Adventure



Shooter

I FEEL GAMES ALLOW  
ME TO EXPRESS MYSELF  
82%

I FEEL VERY CONFIDENT  
WHILE PLAYING GAMES  
90%



I LIKE TO PLAY  
GAMES WITH OTHERS  
82%

I AM EMOTIONALLY  
MOVED BY THE  
EVENTS IN GAMES  
73%



## THE GREAT STAGE

# NEXT LEVELERS

## Identify as a gamer

Small, yet mighty, Next Levelers are the most devoted members of the gaming community. Gaming is their preferred space, one where they can freely express themselves, share and explore. It is their most valued past-time and a daily personal passion.

Like Player Ones, they know everything about the gaming world. Ask them about a video game character or the lore of a gaming franchise storyline, and you'll become quickly acquainted with the full depth of their gaming knowledge.

Gaming not only dominates their attention but also their wallets. Next Levelers spend more on gaming than any other segment, averaging over \$800 every six months. But having the latest console, graphics card or game isn't enough; they also buy convention tickets, gaming apparel, collectibles, subscriptions, in-game content and currency, and donate to their favorite streamers.

Across all platforms and gaming content, Next Levelers clock 139% more hours a week than your average gamer. Consoles and PCs are their preferred platforms. However, they supplement their device portfolio with mobile as well, dedicating more than an hour a day to small-screen gaming. They're also ranked number one in terms of streaming viewership. Almost all Next Levelers describe esports as the future of competitive entertainment.

While new gaming audiences have emerged over the past decade, the industry will always look to these avid fans as a gauge for the overall health of the industry. For these players, gaming is life.

# NEXT LEVELERS

Identify as a gamer

They play more, spend more, view more, and have deeper motivational ties to gaming content than any other gaming persona. And that's saying something.

## Demographics:

- Average Age: 36
- Gender Skew: 75% male

## When it Comes to Gaming:

- At least 90% weekly+ usage across all platforms
- Nearly six times as likely to spend on gaming conventions tournaments and other gaming memberships

## Motivations and Beliefs:

- More likely to believe that gaming builds skills e.g. teamwork, communication, concentration, problem-solving

## FAVORITE GENRES



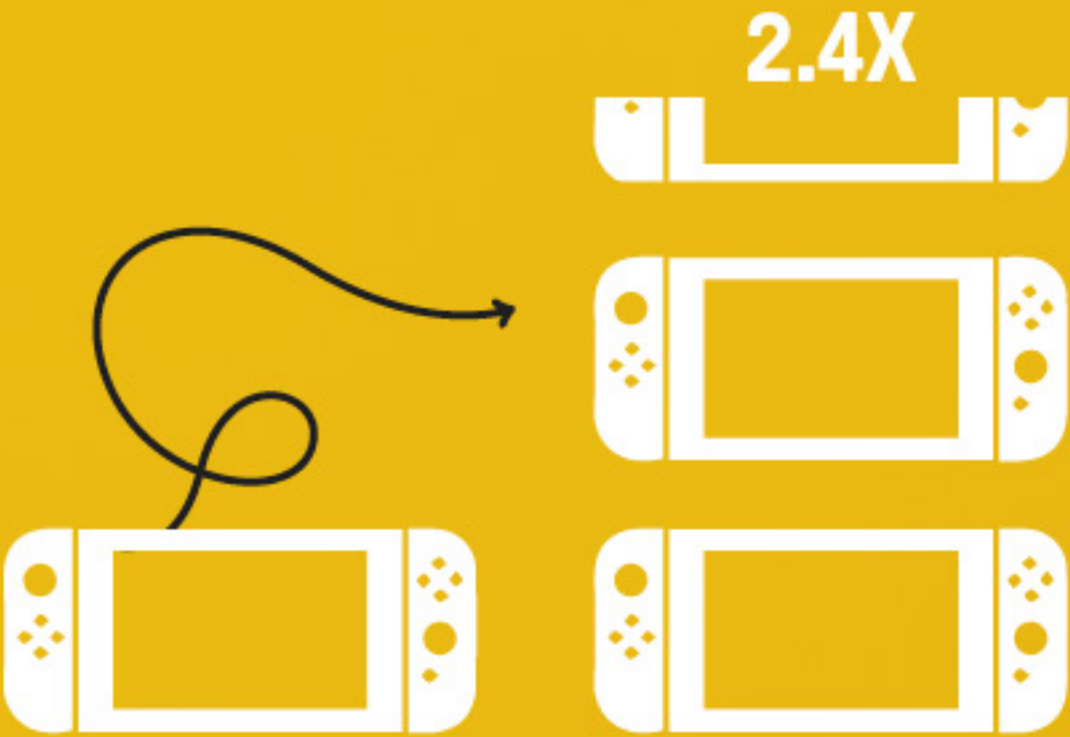
Fighting



Action & Adventure



Battle Royale



**NEXT LEVELERS ENGAGE WITH  
GAMES 2.4X MORE PER WEEK  
THAN YOUR AVERAGE GAMER  
(OR 139% MORE)**



PERCEPTION REALITY

## CONCLUSION

The stereotypical picture of a gamer is out of date. Gamers aren't exclusively male, exclusively teenagers, or exclusively game-obsessed. In actuality, gamers are a spectrum of people with different interests, different backgrounds, and different levels of engagement with the gaming world. What unites them is that they all enjoy gaming.

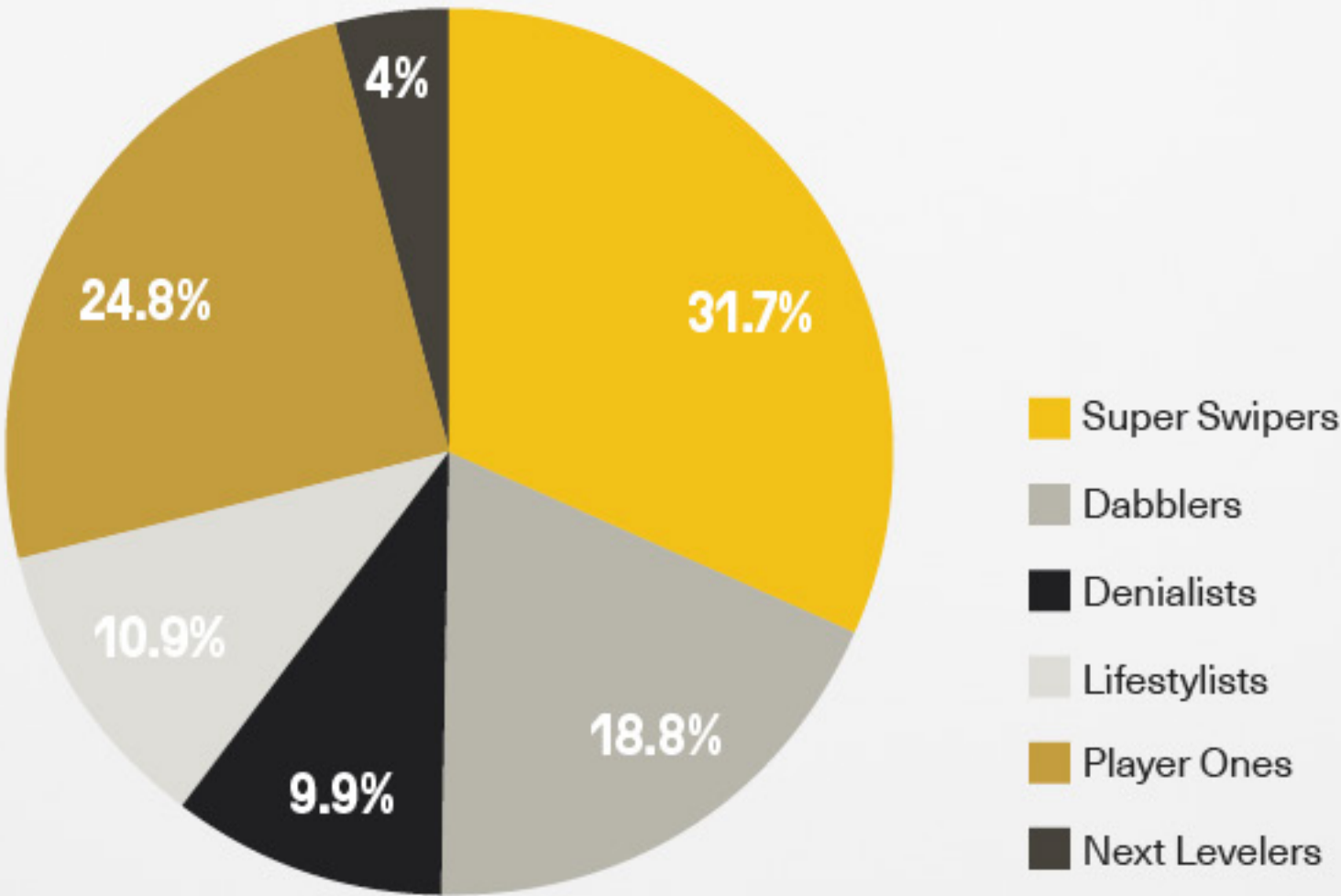
Looking beyond basic demographics and understanding that gamers' motivations and behaviors tend to converge around the games they play and how they play them, we can see a more complete and accurate picture of today's gamer.

To find out more about advertising opportunities in gaming, please contact **Activision Blizzard Media**.

# SHOW ME THE DATA

While our survey captured hundreds of variables to help us dimension today's gamers, we've chosen to highlight just a few of the persona insights below. For more information on gamers, please reach out to Activision Blizzard Media.

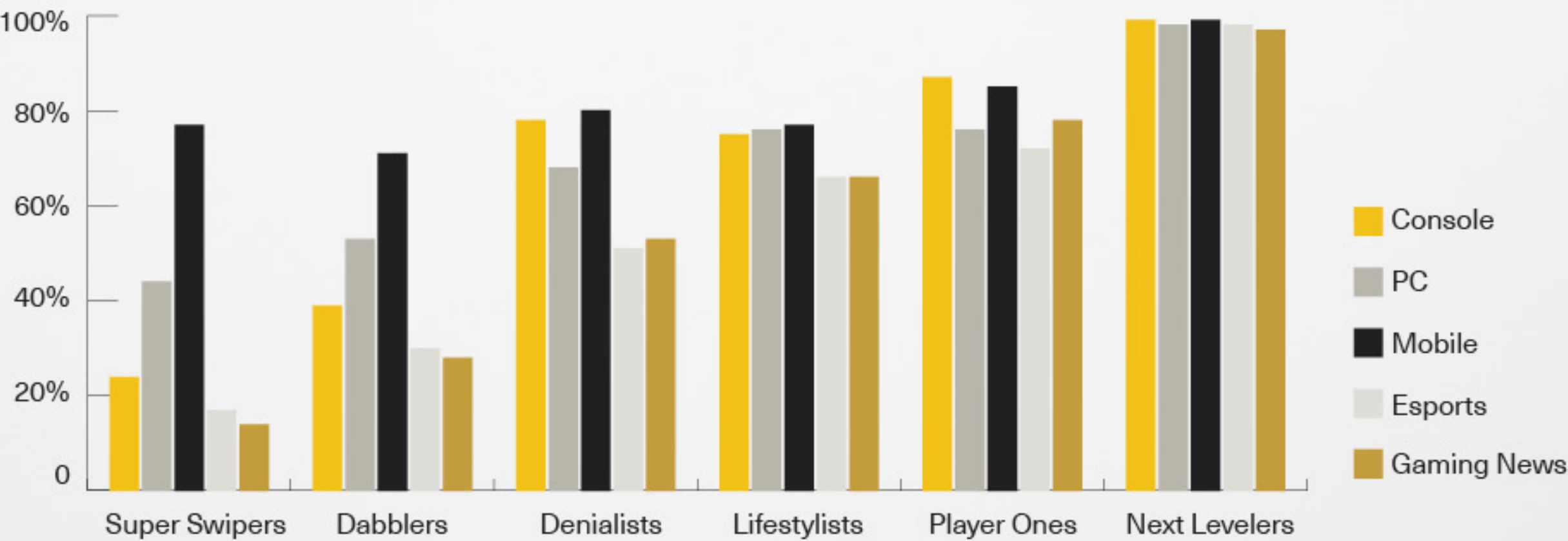
## THE GAMER PERSONAS



Despite making up less than a third of all gamers, Next Levelers and Player Ones are the personas that most closely resemble the stereotypical gamer.

# SHOW ME THE DATA

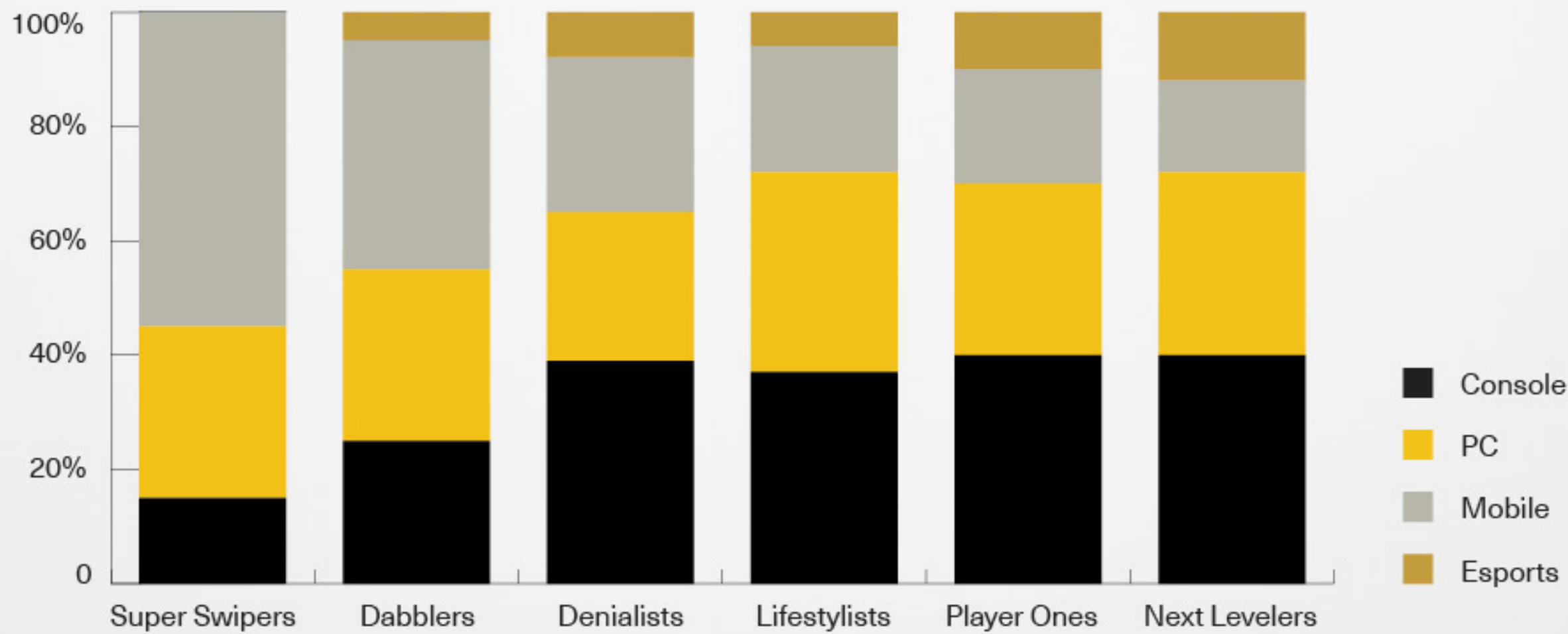
## PERSONA WEEKLY ENGAGEMENT



Almost 100% of Next Levelers spend time every week playing console, PC, and mobile games, watching esports, and reading gaming news.

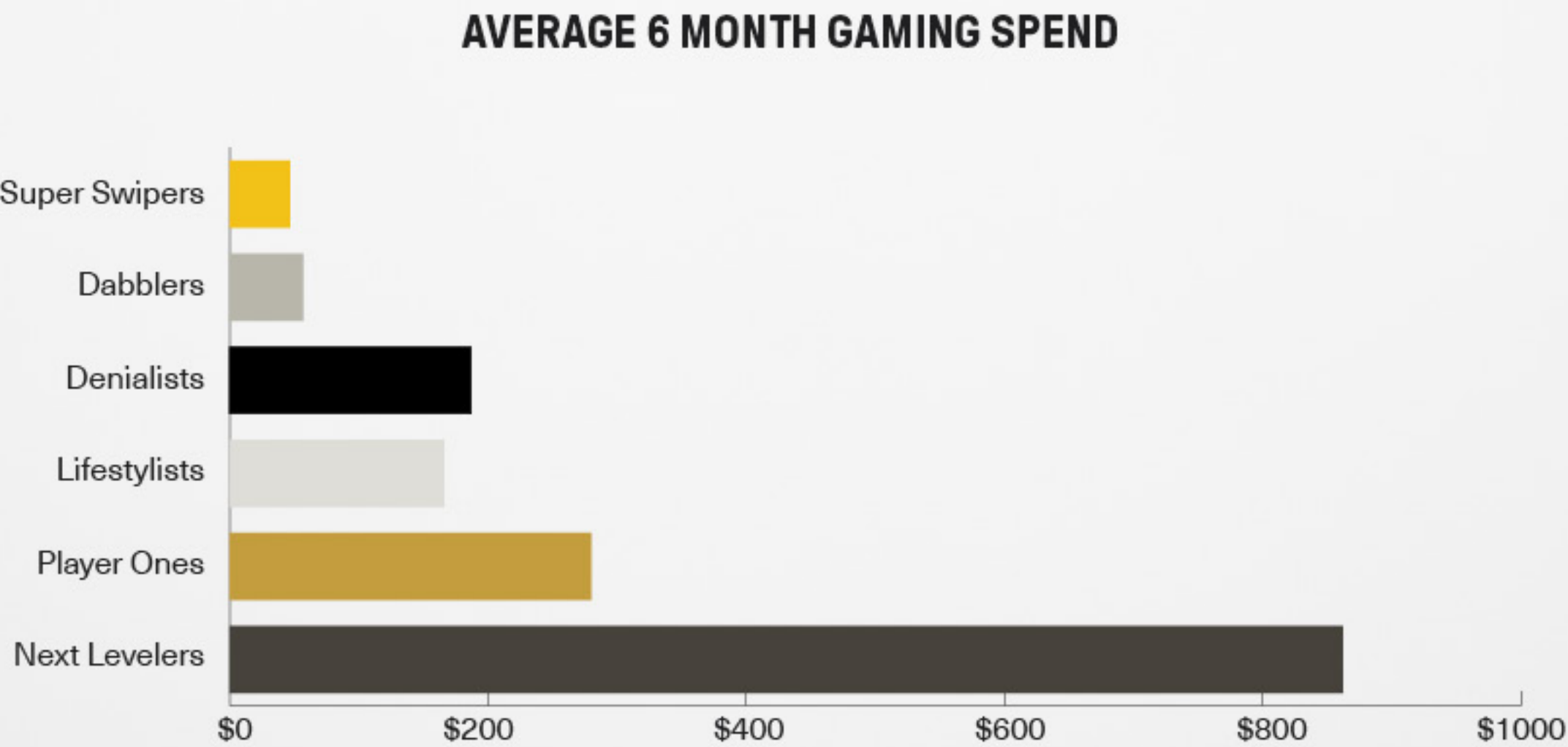
# SHOW ME THE DATA

## WHERE GAMERS SPEND THEIR GAMING TIME



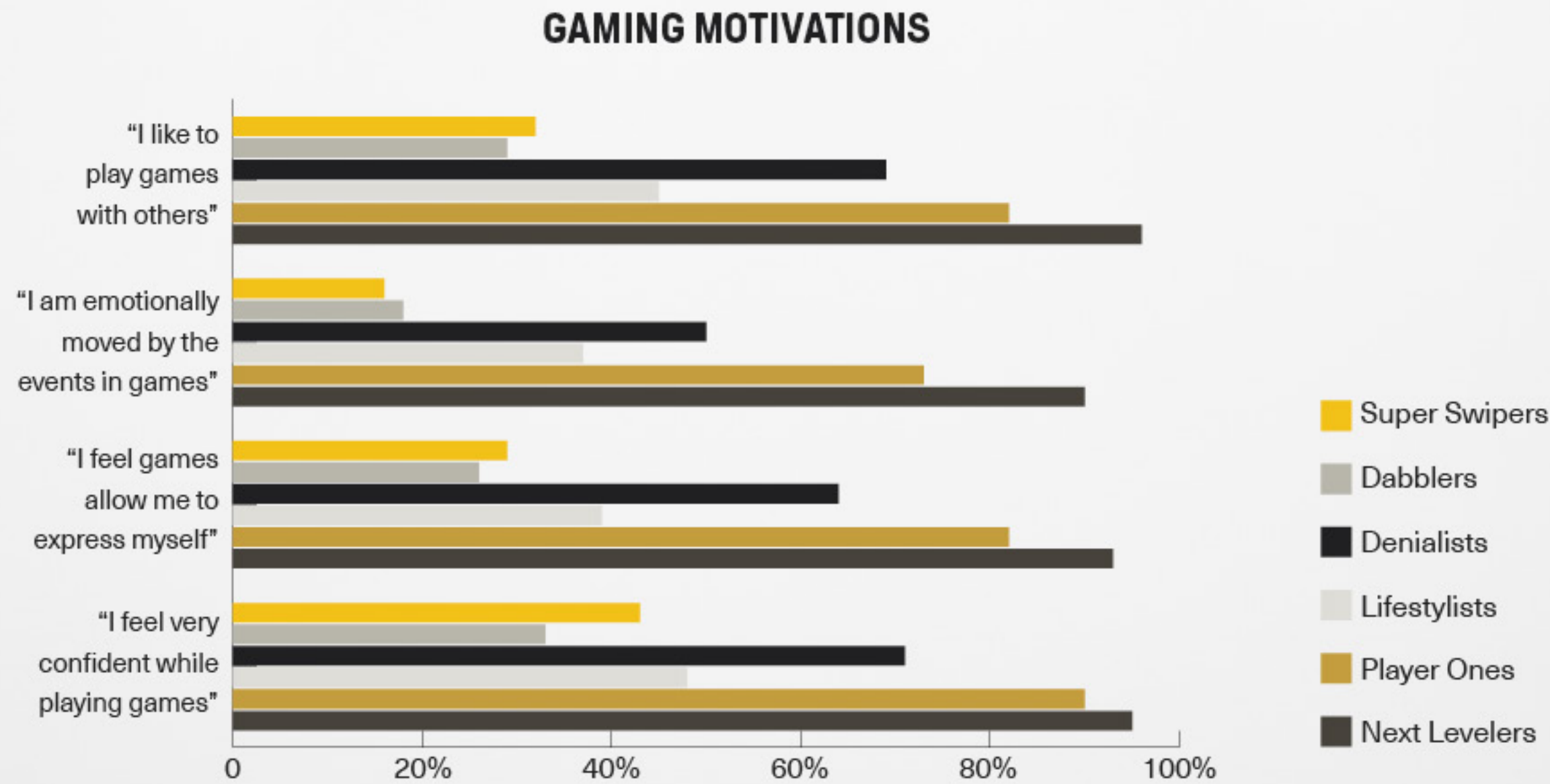
On average, Super Swipers and Dabblers spend most of their time playing mobile games, while the remaining four personas are more varied in where they spend their gaming time.

# SHOW ME THE DATA



When it comes to spend, there's a huge variance in the level of investment these personas are comfortable with.

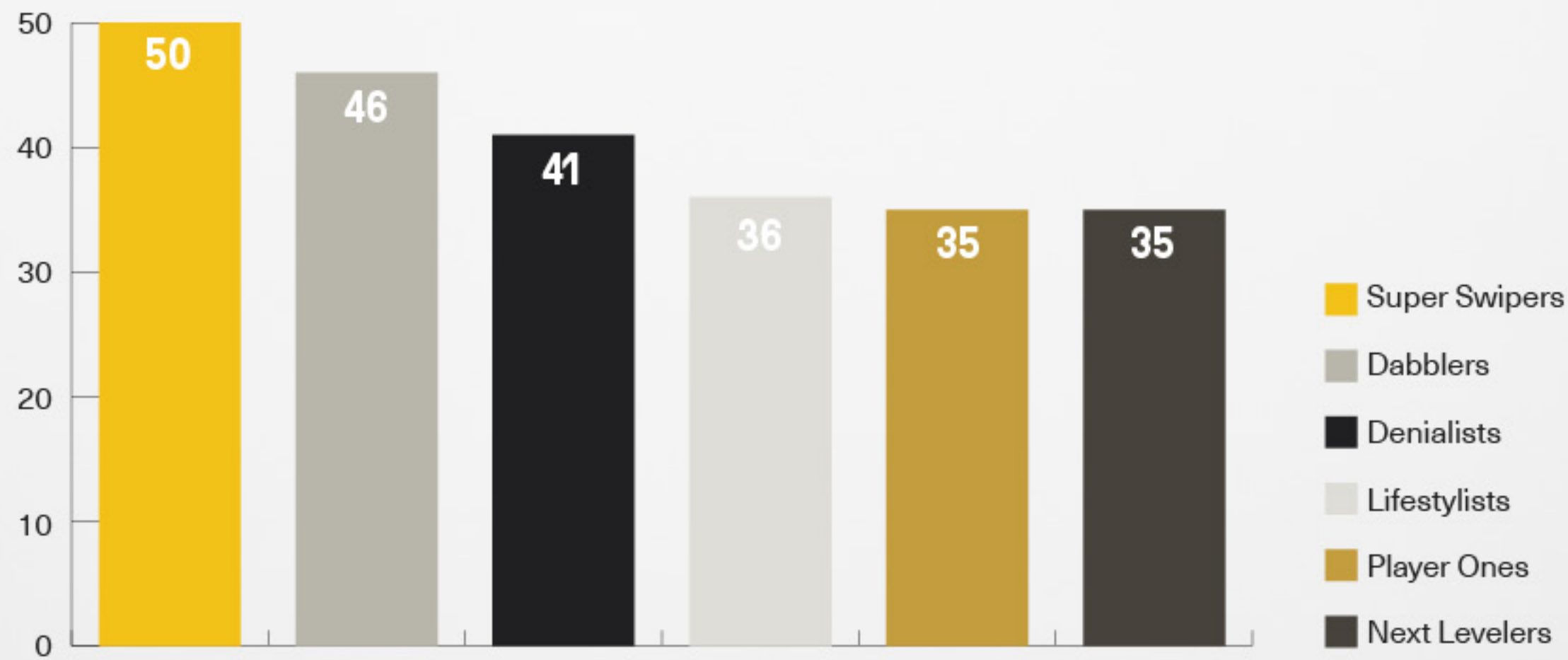
# SHOW ME THE DATA



Beyond even the four motivations shown, Player Ones and Next Levelers tend to have more motivational ties to gaming than their fellow gaming enthusiasts.

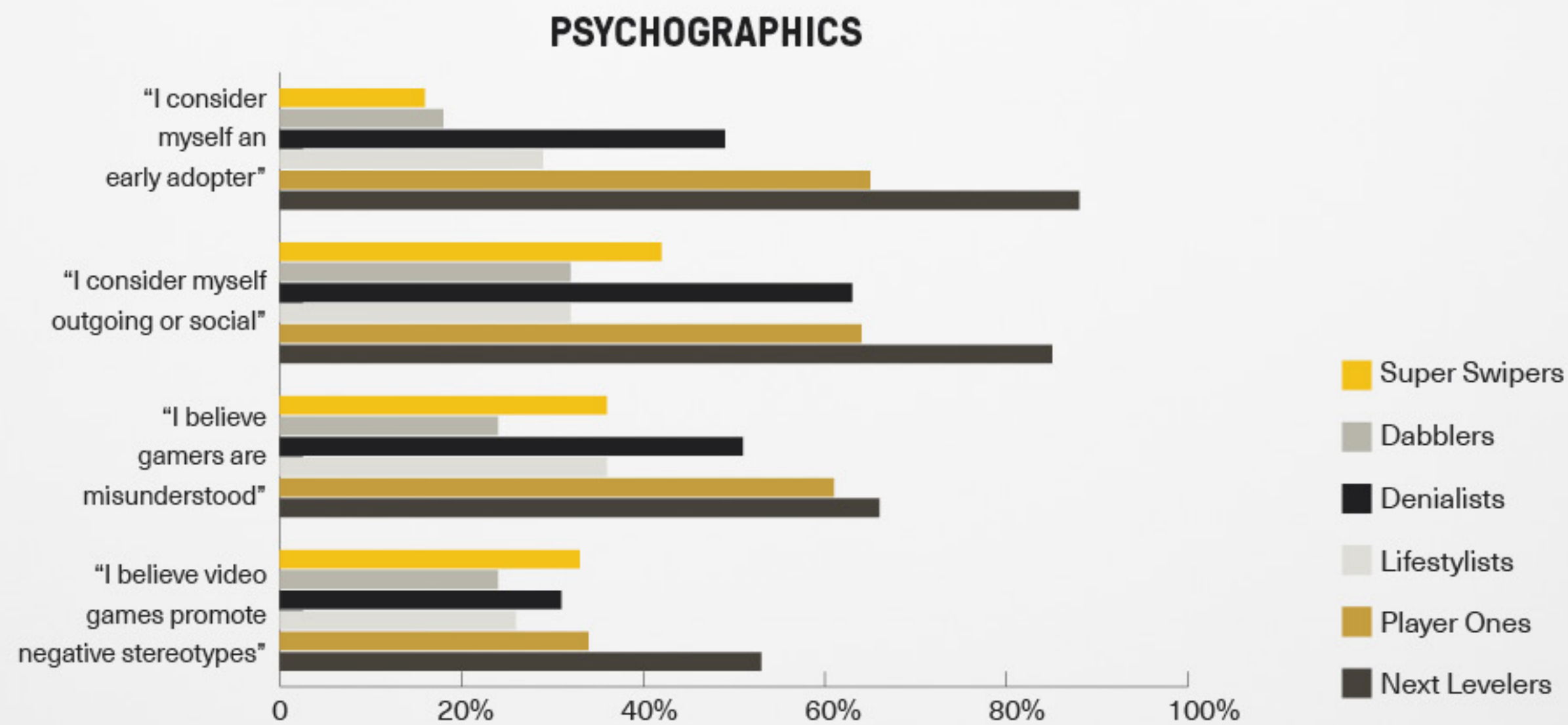
# SHOW ME THE DATA

AVERAGE AGE BY GAMER PERSONA



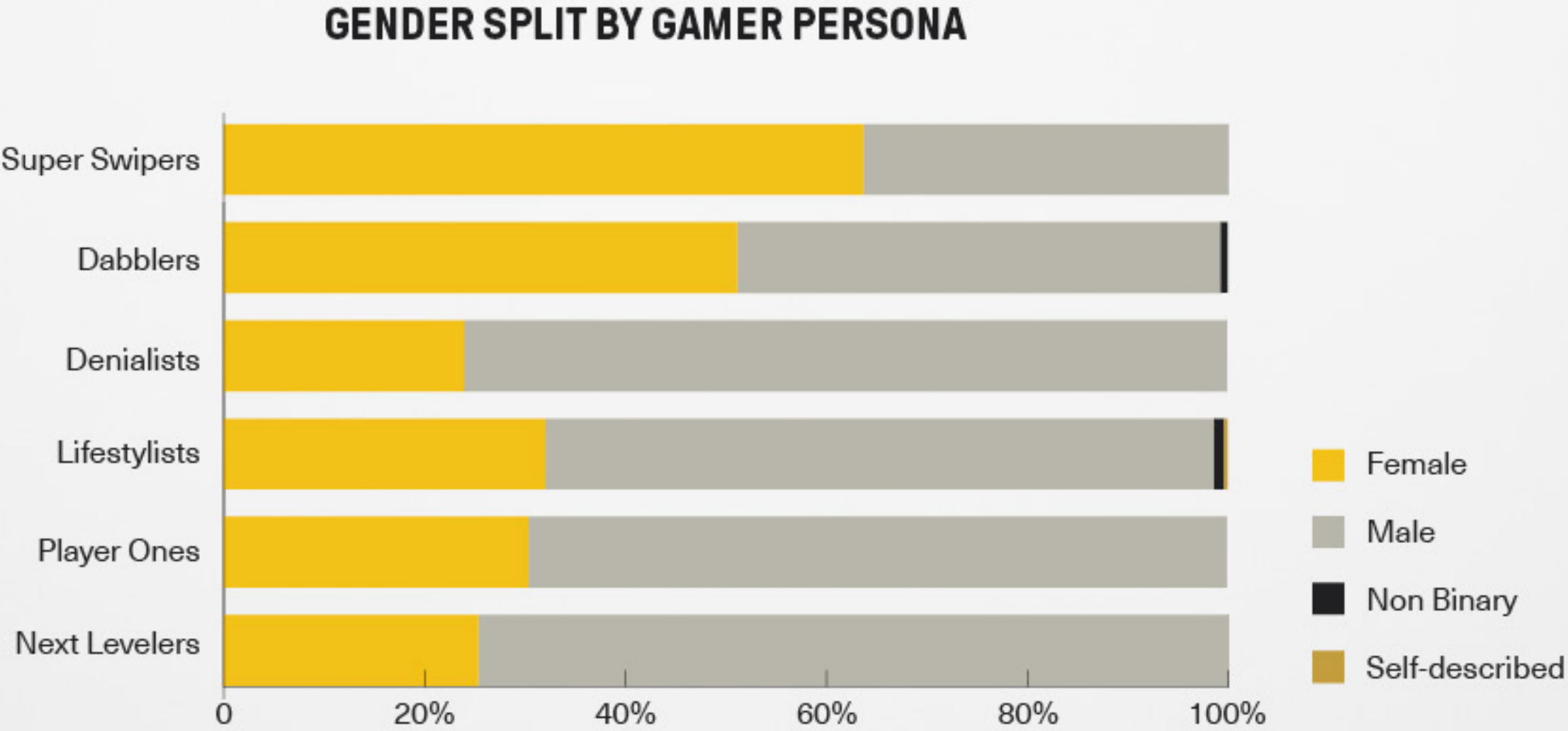
On average, the gamers who identify with the gamer label tend to be younger.

# SHOW ME THE DATA



Denialists have similar levels of agreement with psychographic statements to Player Ones and Next Levelers, despite their reluctance to identify as a gamer.

# SHOW ME THE DATA



Women have a strong presence in every single gamer persona; however, the most evenly distributed gender composition exists for Dabblers.

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**M E D I A**

Learn more at [www.activisionblizzardmedia.com](http://www.activisionblizzardmedia.com)



# WELL PLAYED



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